



## DEPARTMENT OF AUDITS AND ACCOUNTS

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**Greg S. Griffin**  
STATE AUDITOR  
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February 28, 2018

Honorable Rich Golick  
Chair, Judiciary Non-Civil Committee  
218 State Capitol  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note  
House Bill 716 (LC 41 1225)

Dear Chairman Golick:

This bill would allow individuals seeking treatment for drug and alcohol abuse or mental health issues to refer themselves to law enforcement officers and agencies without being arrested. All state, county, and local law enforcement agencies must maintain a program that would inform such individuals about available treatment programs and, if requested, provide a referral. Additionally, officers may offer any individual who could be arrested for certain drug violations the option to be immediately taken to a treatment facility. The officer may take the individual to such a program within the county or an adjacent county.

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities maintains a list of drug abuse and mental health treatment providers. Therefore, staff at state law enforcement agencies indicated they would not incur costs to develop a referral program. In addition, the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Community Supervision (DCS) both indicated that instruction on crisis intervention and managing individuals with mental health or drug-related issues already occurs within current training programs. Officials with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and the Peace Officer Standards and Training Council also stated that the bill would have no fiscal impact on their operations.


DCS did estimate a one-time cost of \$120,363 to install cages in at least one car per county to ensure officer safety while transporting individuals to a treatment facility. According to DCS, each cage costs \$757.

It should be noted that the fiscal note does not include any potential costs to local law enforcement agencies. Those agencies could incur costs if they do not already provide training to address individuals with mental health or drug-related issues. Local governments operating jails may also experience cost savings if individuals are diverted from incarceration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Greg S. Griffin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "G".

Greg S. Griffin  
State Auditor

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Teresa A. MacCartney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "T".

Teresa A. MacCartney, Director  
Office of Planning and Budget

GSG/TAM/ed